

# NETWORK NEWS

INFORMATION FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

## DELIVERING TECHNOLOGY ACCESS TO AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES

### Explore College Partnerships for Your Center

Looking for a resourceful partner for starting or expanding childcare services at a Neighborhood Networks center? What about a partner who could also train residents to start childcare businesses or to be preschool teachers? Explore HUD's Office of University Partnerships (OUP) and its grants to colleges and universities for community initiatives. Armed with information on what communities in partnership with local colleges and universities can do with OUP grants, Neighborhood Networks centers may want to develop local partnerships and apply for grants.

#### University Partnerships

Since 1994 OUP has provided grants and technical assistance to hundreds of 2- and 4-year colleges and universities to work with local partners to revitalize communities. In 2003 OUP will award nearly \$34 million in funding for its college and university grant programs.

Development and support of childcare and job-training programs are among the many grantee initiatives funded by OUP. Neighborhood Networks centers seeking assistance with childcare programs can explore partnerships with college departments of education; together, they can apply for a HUD grant to support their partnership's initiative.

#### Microenterprise Center for Childcare Providers

In 1999 Santa Ana College (SAC) in California received an OUP grant from the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities program to establish the Microenterprise Center for Childcare Providers.

The Microenterprise Center's 12-week training program includes 6 weeks of child development training, 4 weeks of business training, and 2 weeks of first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation training. The college donates instructors' time for child development and business training. Latino Health Access, a community-based partner, provides the first-aid training.

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Multifamily Housing Programs  
[www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org)



## College Partnerships (continued from page 1)

This innovative program has achieved the following impressive results:

- **Trained Spanish-speaking women to establish home-based childcare businesses.** More than 175 Spanish-speaking women have received training and 64 have already started their own childcare businesses.
- **Encouraged high-quality childcare and offered technical and financial assistance to help Microenterprise Center graduates become licensed childcare providers.** The grant provides \$5,000 loans to help women complete California's childcare licensing process. Graduates can also access a \$150,000 revolving loan pool to purchase daycare equipment and upgrade their homes to meet licensing requirements.
- **Increased the supply of quality, affordable childcare.** Those 64 new businesses provide childcare to more than 250 children.
- **Improved qualifications and earnings for its graduates.** Twenty graduates continued their education by enrolling in SAC's Human Development Certificate Program. Women who complete the entire certificate


program meet California's requirements to become preschool teachers, and those who complete a portion of the program receive certification to work in childcare centers. In 2002 the college began offering the program in a bilingual format.

## Neighborhood Networks

Centers looking for models of what a Neighborhood Networks center-college partnership can achieve should contact OUP to find out if:

- An existing OUP grantee located nearby needs additional community partners.
- A nearby college might be interested in partnering with a Neighborhood Networks center to apply for an OUP grant.

For more information about OUP, visit its Web site at [www.oup.org](http://www.oup.org), or contact:

University Partnerships Clearinghouse  
P.O. Box 6091  
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## NETWORKNEWS

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## Oakridge Center Provides Onsite Childcare

**M**ore parents are able to stay employed or go to school because we provide affordable onsite childcare,” says Sue Underwood, director of the Oakridge Neighborhood Networks Learning Center in Des Moines, Iowa. With capacity for 74 children, the Oakridge Early Enrichment Center offers programs for infants, toddlers, and preschool children ages birth to 5. There is also a separate after-school program for youth in kindergarten through grade 12. More than 50 percent of the children enrolled at the childcare center live at Oakridge Apartments, and the others are neighborhood residents.

### Building the Program

“We started out small, offering childcare in an apartment in 1981. Then as demand grew in the late 1980s, we applied for and received a series of grants to build a separate building for our early childhood and youth programs,” Underwood says.

Operating funds come from a variety of public and private sources. The Iowa Department of Education provides substantial annual grants, and many parents also receive childcare subsidies from the Iowa Department of Human Services. If parents do not qualify for public childcare subsidies, they pay on a sliding fee scale.


“Wraparound grants are another important resource for extending the hours of the preschool program. Our core hours are 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., but the wraparound grants allow children to arrive before 9 and leave after 3, which are childcare hours that working parents really need,” Underwood says.

### The Neighborhood Services Advantage

Apartment and center managers who are new to childcare often choose to work with experienced, local nonprofit groups to provide onsite early childhood programs; the Oakridge Neighborhood Networks Learning Center teamed up with Oakridge Neighborhood Services (ONS), an experienced nonprofit group that specializes in affordable housing and community services and manages Oakridge Apartments.

Given the complexity of starting, funding, and sustaining a group childcare program, the nonprofit organization’s experience with grant writing and networking has turned out to be an advantage, as year after year, experience helps ONS find funding to sustain the Oakridge Early Enrichment Center. According to Underwood: “Some of our teachers have been here for over 10 years and we have low staff turnover, probably because we pay competitive wages and offer benefits.”

For more information about the Early Enrichment Center at Oakridge Apartments, contact:

Sue Underwood, Director  
Oakridge Neighborhood Networks  
Learning Center  
1236 Oakridge Drive  
Des Moines, Iowa 50314  
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## Get to Work? How?

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*Getting to work. It's one of the basics of community life. Public and community transportation play a critical role in moving Americans to employment sites, training facilities, educational programs, interviews, and childcare—and then back home again. For some, it's a standard commute on a train or bus; for others, it might be a third-shift van pool to a nearby factory; and for yet others, it can be a connection to new skills through the local technical college.*

—Community Transportation Association of America Web site  
([www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org))

**D**o residents at your Neighborhood Networks center need better transportation to get to work, interviews, training, childcare, and medical appointments? Since 1989 the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) has worked with local agencies and community organizations in urban, rural, and tribal areas to help residents travel to work and other key destinations.

If improving community transportation is an important issue for residents at your Neighborhood Networks center, CTAA offers a variety of information and technical assistance as well as low-interest loans and a competitive demonstration grant program.

**CTAA staff assistance.** Staff members are available to discuss CTAA resources, provide contact information for model programs, and answer questions.

**Information station.** CTAA's Web site ([www.CTAA.org](http://www.CTAA.org)) includes a section called Information Station, which has

important community transportation news, ideas, and resources, including the following publications:

- *Linking People to the Workplace* toolkit provides information and guidance for enhancing mobility, partnerships, funding sources, legislation, and current practices. Order a free CD or download the 138-page toolkit. Medical and senior transportation toolkits are also available.
- *Community Transportation* is a magazine that includes funding and agency association resources. It also provides information on purchasing transportation equipment.
- *Our Role in the Process: A Grass-roots Guide to Building Community-Based Employment Transportation*, a new report, offers innovative transit ideas from other communities.

### **Peer-to-peer technical assistance.**

CTAA's nationwide network of transit experts can help strengthen transit options in your community, whether you want to start a transportation service or make better use of existing services. These peer advisers can provide assistance over the phone, by e-mail, or in person on a variety of subjects such as volunteer driving programs, van and bus systems, and employment transportation. You can submit an online application for free peer assistance.

**Loans and grants.** Available financial resources include the following:

- The Community Transportation Development Fund, which offers low-interest loans (up to \$150,000) to



nonprofit, public, or private transportation providers.

- Demonstration funds available to communities for transit services linked to U.S. Department of Labor One Stop Centers and other job development programs.

For more information about CTAA, contact:

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Transportation Specialist  
Community Transportation Association  
of America  
1341 G Street NW, 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (800) 527-8279, ext. 132  
E-mail: [Sampson@ctaa.org](mailto:Sampson@ctaa.org)  
Web site: [www.CTAA.org](http://www.CTAA.org) 

## Childcare. Transportation. Read All About It!

Neighborhood Networks has free and informative technical assistance guides on both childcare and transportation.

***The Childcare Challenge: Models for Childcare Services*** explores both family and group daycare models that centers can use to develop childcare services for resident families. These models also offer ideas for expanding employment and business opportunities for residents who are interested in childcare careers.

This guide includes helpful information on starting a center, creating training programs, and identifying center partners, as well as information on marketing and media outreach, sustainability, funding, contact information, resources, and case studies.

***No Car? No Problem! Innovative Transportation Solutions*** provides Neighborhood Networks centers with ideas, examples, and tools that they can use to enhance transportation services and meet residents' needs. The guide focuses on the experiences of a community in Florida where residents started a transit company to take people to jobs in the suburbs as well as to grocery stores, shopping centers, and appointments during noncommuting hours.

Using this example as a starting point, the guide discusses how to start a system; it also addresses obstacles and presents available resources. It includes examples of responses to transportation needs in other communities and examples of transportation services currently serving other Neighborhood Networks sites.

Download ***The Childcare Challenge*** and ***No Car? No Problem!*** from the Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org).

Or, order these publications or any other Neighborhood Network technical assistance guides by contacting

Phone: (888) 312-2743

TTY: (800) 483-2209

E-mail: [neighborhoodnetworks@hud.gov](mailto:neighborhoodnetworks@hud.gov)

## Get a Job and a Ride in New Jersey

Innovative transit programs in New Jersey are reducing commuting costs for low-income families and cutting costs for the state's welfare reform program, Work First New Jersey.

Three initiatives target families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and individuals who recently left welfare and entered the workforce. A fourth program—the Get A Job Get A Ride/Corporate Partner Program—encourages businesses to hire unemployed workers and subsidize their commuting costs.

### Programs

States may use TANF funds to subsidize transportation costs such as providing transit passes or tokens for getting to work or taking children to daycare.<sup>1</sup> A partnership between New Jersey Transit and the state's Department of Human Services (DHS) has developed several successful transit programs for TANF and post-TANF families.

- **WorkPass** is a public transit program that helps TANF clients get to jobs and to training. New Jersey Transit sells monthly passes for bus, rail, and light rail to Work First New Jersey agencies. They, in turn, distribute the passes to TANF clients for work-related activities such as getting to job interviews and training classes.

This program has cut transportation costs in half for New Jersey's TANF program. A two-zone bus pass is \$54 or \$59 a month, depending on the area, while the former travel reimbursement system averaged \$120 a month per client.

- **Get A Job Get A Ride** provides one free monthly public transit pass to individuals who leave TANF, enter the workforce, and achieve earnings above TANF limits. Reaching this salary triggers the closing of the person's TANF case file and the case-worker can apply to New Jersey Transit for a free 1-month transit pass.
- **Extended WorkPass** supplies post-TANF recipients who continue working with an additional 6 months of transit passes. Each month, DHS mails checks made out to New Jersey Transit directly to the individual's home. The post-TANF client uses the checks to purchase monthly passes directly from a New Jersey Transit ticket agent.
- Although not a transit subsidy, **Transportation Block Grants** are funded from savings generated by the WorkPass program. DHS uses these monies for a competitive grant program that funds local initiatives to help TANF recipients travel to work or training. Counties that participate in WorkPass are eligible to receive the grants, which have funded a variety of transit projects such as providing shuttles that connect to public transit routes, helping people qualify

<sup>1</sup> *Helping Families Achieve Self-Sufficiency: A Guide On Funding Services for Children and Families through the TANF Program*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance. ([www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofa/funds2.htm](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofa/funds2.htm))

for drivers' licenses, buying and repairing older automobiles for individuals who lack access to mass transit, and subsidizing existing transit routes to better accommodate employment sites and schedules.

## **Corporate Partner Program**

The Get A Job Get A Ride/Corporate Partner Program is an initiative that encourages businesses to hire unemployed workers or TANF recipients. Eligible new employees receive a free 1-month pass for buses, trains, or light rail at no cost to the business. To qualify, workers must meet specific criteria, such as being unemployed for 30 days, having a starting hourly wage of \$10 or less, or working at least 20 hours per week when they return to the workforce. This program is open to businesses that participate in

New Jersey Transit's BusinessPass program to encourage commuting by public transit, vanpools, and carpools.

According to New Jersey Transit officials, the corporate partner program helps new employees make the transition back to work. The free pass not only helps out monetarily until they receive their first paycheck, it also supports their getting to work on time every day, which is another incentive for businesses to participate in Get A Job Get A Ride.

For more information about any of these New Jersey Transit programs, contact:

Carol Duffy  
Manager of Sales and Employer Services  
New Jersey Transit Authority  
Phone: (973) 491-7600  
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